

Calderdale PRU

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133693
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	360569
Inspection dates	27–28 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Alastair Younger

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	7–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Cathy Gunningham
Headteacher	Mr Simon Lee
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Seven lessons were seen, each taught by a different member of staff. Meetings were held with senior staff, members of the management committee and the School Improvement Partner. Informal discussions were held with two parents and several pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation, including that relating to safeguarding and school improvement. Seventeen questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether attainment can be expected to reach national expectations.
- Whether learning and progress are good enough to compensate for low attainment.
- Whether a suitable balance is kept between promoting pupils' academic learning and their personal development.
- How effectively senior staff, members of the management committee and the local authority, in its role as the appropriate authority, work together to drive improvement.

Information about the school

The unit serves the whole of the local authority in providing for pupils who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from their mainstream schools. It operates on three different sites, one for each key stage. All pupils have a degree of special educational needs and/or disability and about a fifth have a statement of special educational needs. There is a very high turnover of pupils reflecting the unit's priority aim to re-integrate pupils into mainstream schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than average. Most pupils are White British. Boys outnumber girls by about five to one. The unit has Healthy School status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a well-established unit with a long record of success in achieving good outcomes. On admission, nearly all pupils have had a highly disrupted education and experienced significant difficulties in mainstream school. As a result, attainment on entry is nearly always low and by the time they join the unit, many pupils have already fallen into a habit of low or non-attendance. Attainment and attendance remain low but improve significantly for many pupils during their time in the unit.

By helping pupils to make rapid and sustainable progress and to establish better patterns of attendance, the unit enjoys considerable success in returning a large proportion of pupils to mainstream provision or, in the case of Year 11 pupils, ensuring that they move on to positive destinations on leaving. This demonstrates outcomes for pupils that are well in excess of what might have been reasonably expected given their starting points.

Teaching and learning are consistently good and occasionally outstanding. The curriculum is imaginatively planned to ensure a good balance between pupils' learning and their personal development. Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported and the unit works closely and successfully with a wide range of schools and partner agencies concerned with the social care and welfare of young people.

Links with parents and carers are satisfactory. There is scope, however, to involve them more effectively in promoting better attendance. Behaviour is good. Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles but some pupils are reluctant to cease smoking at lunch and break times.

Self-evaluation is accurate and effective. The monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous and ensures good overall outcomes for pupils. The unit plans comprehensively for improvement and given its track record of success has a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance and hence raise attainment and improve pupils' preparation for future economic well-being by:
 - working more closely with parents and carers to involve them more in the promotion of better attendance
 - developing a system where pupils who do attend are rewarded for encouraging other pupils to attend more frequently.
- Further promote healthy lifestyles by refining the rewards and sanctions system to make it clear that smoking is strongly discouraged.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

On all three sites pupils work hard and behave well in lessons. As a result, they learn well and make good progress and their attainment improves strongly. Pupils are keen to enter into discussions with staff and each other and are proud to demonstrate what they have learned and remembered. They listen well to the views of staff and other pupils and contribute well to the assessment of their own work and to that of their peers. It is clearly evident that pupils want to learn and they enjoy doing so.

A good pointer to the achievement of pupils is the fact that the large majority return successfully to school much better equipped emotionally and socially to succeed in a mainstream setting. In the case of Year 11 pupils, the very large majority move on to further education, training or employment. Over 90% of last year's Year 11 leavers are known to be continuing to access the positive destinations to which they transferred. No group of pupils, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is seen to be making consistently significantly different progress to any other.

Each of the sites operates as a settled and friendly community where behaviour is usually good and pupils feel safe. The number of serious incidents has reduced in recent years and exclusion is becoming increasingly rare. Many pupils are over-reliant on adult support when they are admitted but this reliance tends to diminish over the length of their stay. Personal responsibility is encouraged and pupils frequently acquit themselves well in public and when taking part in sporting contests with other schools. Most pupils participate wholeheartedly in physical exercise and adventure activities. After-school activities, such as table tennis tournaments, are well supported and hugely enjoyed. Pupils fully understand the inherent dangers of smoking but some still participate. Smoking cessation programmes have helped some pupils to give up the habit but not enough is done to discourage smoking at break times. Attendance is low because many pupils have developed an aversion to school before they are admitted to the unit. However, the large majority of pupils improve their attendance during their time in the unit, often rapidly and sustainably so and sometimes significantly, for instance, by as much as 30% in the case of a particularly vulnerable pupil. Nevertheless, absence remains the main barrier towards higher attainment and to pupils' future economic well-being.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good. All of that observed during the inspection was good and there is evidence from monitoring by senior staff and the local authority that teaching is sometimes even better and is rarely worse. Classroom staff share a good affinity with pupils. Some lessons are led by youth workers or other unqualified teachers but the standard of teaching is equally high and pupils are not aware of the difference. Classroom support staff are adept at supporting learning and behaviour in equal measures. Good use is frequently made of computers and other technological aids to promote learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Work is carefully varied to make sure that individual needs are being met, especially by identifying the methods by which pupils learn most effectively; for instance by looking at, hearing about or doing things.

The curriculum has been developed well to recognise the individual needs of pupils attending the unit. Care is taken to ensure that all activities are educationally valid, while recognising that many pupils are emotionally vulnerable and in need of support in their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. There is a good focus on the promotion of numeracy, literacy, science and information and communication technology. Primary aged pupils access a typical class-based primary school curriculum while secondary age pupils have good access to subject specialists, such as those from adult education who teach challenging construction activities. A good range of enrichment activities includes

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many opportunities for pupils to participate in competitive and recreational sport and invaluable opportunities for pupils to experience life away from home on residential visits.

The unit provides a high level of care and support. Individual needs are carefully identified and met, often through close working with the many professionals and agencies involved in what are usually very complicated young lives. Links with the police are especially valued and expedient. Good links with the many schools which refer pupils, lead to the sharing of important information when it is available and greatly enhance the successful return of pupils to mainstream settings. The unit recognises that there are still further possibilities to improve attendance, for instance, by working more closely with families and encouraging pupils to support one another.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers are dedicated to improving the lives of the pupils under their care. Staff are almost unanimous in saying that the unit is helping them to develop professionally and giving them opportunities to further their ambitions. The management of teaching and learning is strongly focussed on raising pupils' attainment, while not neglecting the importance of promoting their personal development. Leaders and managers are highly committed to driving improvement, although occasionally the effectiveness of this is hindered by the establishment of too many priorities. The work of the management committee is highly effective. It is very supportive and equally challenging. The local authority, while retaining statutory responsibility for the unit, recognises the strengths of the management committee and the work of senior leaders and maintains a good relationship with the unit.

The safeguarding of pupils is given high priority. Many pupils are highly vulnerable and this is fully recognised by staff. Care is taken to assess potential risk in different situations. Requisite checks are made before anyone is employed. Staff are well trained in recognising signs of abuse or failure of pupils to thrive.

Equal opportunities are promoted well. There is no evidence of discrimination and all groups of pupils achieve broadly equally. Individual needs and rights are well respected by pupils and staff alike. The unit contributes satisfactorily to community cohesion. Each of the sites operates as a cohesive community but little is done to create a single identity for the whole, other than in staff development. Many pupils, especially those of primary age, are involved in initiatives which contribute to community awareness, such as by contributing produce from the primary site allotment to the Salvation Army for distribution to those who need it most.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Few parents and carers responded to an invitation to express their views about the unit but most of those who did were supportive of the work it is doing and the way it is helping their children.

A few parents and carers acknowledged that their children did not like school. This was not directed specifically at the unit. A typical comment was that their child disliked it no more than any other form of schooling. A few parents and carers expressed dissatisfaction with the unit but chose not to expand on their reasoning so it was impossible to follow up their criticisms.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Calderdale PRU to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 17 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 55 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	4	24	9	53	0	0	3	18
The school keeps my child safe	6	35	7	41	1	6	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	9	53	7	41	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	5	29	9	53	2	12	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	6	35	8	47	1	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	53	6	35	1	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	41	6	35	1	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	7	41	6	35	1	6	1	6
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	35	6	35	2	12	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	47	7	41	1	6	1	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	35	10	59	1	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	6	35	10	59	1	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	5	29	10	59	1	6	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



31 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Calderdale PRU, Halifax, HX2 9SR

Inspectors visited your PRU recently and judged it to be good.

Here are the strengths.

- You are well taught and as a result learn well and make good progress.
- The unit helps most of you to return to school, stay there and achieve success.
- You behave well in the unit, for some of you this is a first.
- You enjoy your physical activities, feel safe in the unit and contribute well to it being a friendly community.
- Your timetables are well adapted to meet your needs.
- You are well cared for, guided and supported.
- The unit is well led and managed.

Here are some areas we think could be improved.

- Some of you smoke too much – you could give up if you were more strongly discouraged from doing so.
- Some of you do not attend as well as you should – give it a try, there are lots of good things you are missing out on. Perhaps those of you who do attend could encourage your friends who do not attend to do so.
- Sometimes your leaders and managers are so keen to make the unit better that they introduce new ideas before having checked what is working and what is not.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Alastair Younger

Lead inspector

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